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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 001344

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR, INL/LP

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [XL](#) [TD](#)  
SUBJECT: MANNING AND CHERTOFF: CLOSER COLLABORATION  
BENEFITS US ALL

Classified By: Classified by: DCM, Eugene P. Sweeney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: T&T Prime Minister Manning hosted DHS Secretary Chertoff for a bilateral meeting on October 26,

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prior to a multilateral meeting with CARICOM representatives (reported septel). In the meeting, Manning assured Secretary Chertoff on Cricket World Cup security preparations, including an update on visa issuance. He also focused on the need for more counter narcotics attention to T&T and to the region and on the improving partnership between the countries. Secretary Chertoff highlighted existing Coast Guard programs to the region, and to carry Manning,s concerns back to Washington for discussion with appropriate agencies. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) In a congenial hour-long meeting, Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff and Prime Minister Patrick Manning discussed a broad range of issues, highlighting areas of potential cooperation and assistance to Trinidad and Tobago. Manning focused on improving T&T,s capacity not only to secure its own borders against trafficking in narcotics and weapons, but also on assisting other CARICOM countries, specifically the Eastern Caribbean, with patrolling their waters. Commenting on Cricket World Cup (CWC) security preparations, Manning assured Secretary Chertoff that plans are on track, and revealed that the CWC visa will be required for Pakistan and a number of additional, unspecified countries. Secretary Chertoff committed to continuing the existing good relationship and promised to examine some of Manning,s requests in conjunction with the appropriate agencies in Washington. Attendees were:

USG:  
- Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security  
- Cynthia Bergman, Acting Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, DHS  
- Patrick Duddy, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of State  
- Dr. Roy Austin, Ambassador  
- Jay Ahern, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations, CBP  
- Adam Isles, Counselor to the Secretary of Homeland Security  
- Joe Chamberlain, Political Officer (Notetaker)

GOTT:  
- The Honorable Patrick Manning, Prime Minister  
- Senator the Honorable Martin Joseph, Minister of National Security  
- Joan Massiah, Chief Executive Officer, National Security Council, Office of the Prime Minister  
- Margaret King-Rousseau, Head of the Americas Division, MFA

- Keith Kerwood, Foreign Service Officer, Office of the Prime Minister

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WE CAN PATROL OUR OWN WATERS, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE OECS?  
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13. (C) Prime Minister Manning addressed the issue of patrolling territorial waters to help interdict narcotics and other illicit goods. In the budget speech for this year, Manning announced that T&T intended to purchase three offshore patrol vessels that would serve as mini-command posts with go-fast boats and helicopter landing capabilities.

While these three vessels will patrol T&T territorial waters, Manning is pursuing international assistance to purchase additional vessels that would then be used to patrol the waters of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), small countries without the resources to patrol their own waters. Manning noted that while U.S. efforts at narcotics interdiction in the Caribbean are good, they are focused in the north. Many of the drug runners operating in the north originate in the southern Caribbean, and, as efforts to the north and west increase, trafficking will track farther east before going to the U.S. Further, it would be more palatable for OECS countries to have their waters patrolled by a CARICOM member rather than a third party. Manning also indicated that T&T would open its Coast Guard to nationals from the OECS to facilitate patrols and, ultimately, build capacity.

14. (C) Secretary Chertoff acknowledged the regional approach to patrolling waters, and noted that multilateral efforts were needed, including signing shiprider agreements to allow U.S. officers to participate in these operations. Further, Secretary Chertoff noted that the U.S. Coast Guard had a

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number of training programs in the region that served to increase local capacity and reduce the flow of narcotics to

the U.S.

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THREATS OF INSTABILITY: DISASTERS AND NARCO TRAFFICKING  
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15. (C) PM Manning continued to sound a note of concern over the smaller economies in the region, and what he termed the diversion of U.S. attention from narcotics trafficking towards terrorism farther afield. His argument was that as the smaller island economies lose their traditional agricultural basis due to WTO rulings on subsidies, they must transition. Many are turning to tourism, but all are in a sort of existential crisis in which they ask what future they have. Manning noted that seven of the ten most highly indebted countries (according to The Economist) are in CARICOM. Those economies then are especially vulnerable to instability, from narcotics traffickers or others wielding money and influence who would like to set up shop.

16. (C) Manning also discussed the possibility that natural disasters could lead to unwanted guests showing up and not leaving, further destabilizing Caribbean countries. By way of example, Manning pointed out that in the 1970s, when T&T was in the throes of civil unrest, Venezuela sent boats through T&T waters as a signal that they could do so at any time. More recently, Grenada invited T&T to assist with the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan, and T&T had troops on the ground there in 24 hours. He averred that Venezuela could have troops in T&T, uninvited, within two hours of a major event, such as a severe earthquake.

17. (C) Secretary Chertoff noted that, in light of recent events, the United States has developed a robust, effective domestic disaster response mechanism and also that the USG is on the forefront of international disaster response. Without committing to any specific needs or plans, he ventured that a

natural disaster in the Caribbean would not pose any special difficulties. He further noted the need for continued discussion and contingency planning to take place, as that will ensure that the response to any disaster is appropriate and has been coordinated in advance.

¶8. (C) The Secretary also remarked that there has not actually been a reduction in counter narcotics attention to the region, but that it has taken the form of increased training and partnership programs, rather than direct funding.

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COOPERATION, INFORMATION SHARING AND AN AIRSHOW  
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¶9. (C) PM Manning noted that T&T &deserves special consideration8 from the United States as a major contributor to U.S. energy security. &You don,t have to strike the U.S. to strike the U.S.8 as a terrorist, he quipped. Still, Manning thanked the Secretary for the recent relaxing of restrictions on IMET funds as a sign of closer cooperation. Also, since 2003, when T&T announced that it wanted to be a beacon of integrity in the Caribbean, the Department of Justice has been a good partner in criminal cases, including recent developments in the Piarco Airport fraud case. Still, two key witnesses had charges pending in T&T that would need to be dropped for extradition to the United States. Manning pointed out that it would be politically difficult, but that the T&T side is working on the issue.

¶10. (C) Secretary Chertoff noted that intelligence sharing was important to secure the region, including the United States. He suggested that, once the Cricket World Cup visa comes online, the U.S. could help screen visa applicants to further keep undesirables from entering the region. He also noted the good cooperation on criminal matters, and further emphasized ongoing Coast Guard training programs.

¶11. (C) At the end of the meeting, Manning announced that T&T is planning an air show, and invited U.S. participation. He disclosed that it would take place around August 2007, but that the date had not yet been fixed. He suggested that the U.S. could send an Air Force acrobatic plane group as a centerpiece for the show, which would also include Russian, Venezuelan, UK and U.S. aircraft. The Secretary said that he would pass it to Southcom for their decision.

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COMMENT  
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¶12. (C) PM Manning has moderated his rhetoric from previous criticism of the level of U.S. engagement in the region but still insists that the global war on terror, while important, is distracting vital attention from the Caribbean. In this meeting, he further refined the argument by explicitly stating that the smaller CARICOM economies were at risk of becoming narco-states that could then support terrorists or other transnational criminals. Even so, Manning clearly relished the fact that he hosted the DHS Secretary on the behalf of CARICOM. END COMMENT.

¶13. (U) DHS has cleared this cable.  
AUSTIN